

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 009733
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY
USMISSION GENEVA
CINCPAC
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 009733

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: SNAR, PORG, EAID, VM

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE UN AID TO SRV: NARCOTICS

REF: A) VIENTIANE 0039; B) 77 VIENTIANE 1605;
C) STATE 265881 (NOTAL)

1. DEPT CONCERNED THAT ARNAUD, APPARENTLY ON THE BASIS OF
QUESTIONABLE INFORMATION, HAS RECOMMENDED THAT UNFDAC
PROVIDE \$1 MILLION ANNUALLY FOR QTE OPIUM ERADICATION/
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ADDICT REHABILITATION PROJECTS FOR MONTAGNARD TRIBES IN
THE PLEIKU AND BAN ME THUOT REGION OF VIETNAM UNQTE.
TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY
OPIUM POPPY GROWN IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SOUTHERN VIETNAM.
THE FOREMOST PRIVATE AMERICAN SPECIALIST ON HIGHLAND ETHNIC
MINORITIES OF SOUTHERN VIETNAM (WHO IS CURRENTLY LIVING IN
THE WASHINGTON AREA) HAS ALSO CONFIRMED TO US THAT IN HIS

20 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN HIGHLAND AFFAIRS, HE HAS NEVER ENCOUNTERED ANY POPPY CULTIVATION. FURTHERMORE, WE DOUBT THAT THERE COULD BE ANY SERIOUS ADDICTION PROBLEM AMONG THE ETHNIC MINORITY PEOPLES OF THE HIGHLANDS, ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME ADDICTION IN THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITIES IN THE CITIES OF PLEIKU AND BAN ME THUOT.

2. WE NOTE THAT IN REF B THE SRV AUTHORITIES MENTIONED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE AID IN QTE ESTABLISHING SETTLED PATTERNS OF LIFE UNQTE FOR THE MONTAGNARD TRIBESMEN. SINCE THE MINORITIES IN SOUTHERN VIETNAM ARE NOT NOMADIC AND HAVE TRADITIONALLY LIVED IN ESTABLISHED SETTLEMENTS, WE SUSPECT THAT THE SRV IS SEEKING ASSISTANCE FOR SOME SORT OF RESETTLEMENT PROJECT. WE AGREE WITH COMMENT IN REF B THAT THE VIETNAMESE INTEREST IN A HIGHLAND PROJECT PROBABLY DERIVES FROM THEIR INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING FIRMER CONTROL OVER REBELLIOUS MINORITIES IN THE SOUTH.

3. AS REF B CORRECTLY NOTED, ALTHOUGH THERE HAS NOT BEEN OPIUM GROWN IN THE SOUTH, SOME OF THE UPLAND PEOPLE IN NORTHERN VIETNAM, ESPECIALLY IN THE HILLS AROUND THE DIEN BIEN PHU AREA, ARE TRADITIONAL GROWERS AND USERS OF THE POPPY. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION, HOWEVER, AS TO WHETHER OPIUM IS STILL PRODUCED IN NORTHERN VIETNAM.

4. WHILE WE DO NOT OBJECT TO UNFDAC'S EFFORTS TO DEVISE
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AN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE SRV (REF C), WE BELIEVE THAT THE UN MUST APPROACH THE SRV REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS WITH GREAT CAUTION, WITH THE ABOVE BACKGROUND IN MIND.

5. FOR VIENTIANE: WITHOUT SPECULATING ABOUT SRV MOTIVES, YOU SHOULD INFORMALLY PASS ON OUR RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE MAGNITUDE OF THE DRUG PROBLEM IN THE PLEIKU/BAN ME THUOT AREA AND URGE THAT BEFORE MAKING ANY FIRM COMMITMENTS TO THE VIETNAMESE ON THIS PROJECT, UNFDAC GET AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE.

6. FOR GENEVA: WHEN UMBRIGHT AND MACKENZIE RETURN TO GENEVA, YOU SHOULD ALSO CONVEY OUR DOUBTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED CROP SUBSTITUTION PROJECT IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS. CHRISTOPHER

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